



Executive Board

Hundred and ninety-fourth session

194 EX/28

PARIS, 17 February 2014
Original: English

Item 28 of the provisional agenda

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF GAZA: IMPLEMENTATION OF 192 EX/DECISION 34

SUMMARY

This document summarizes progress made by UNESCO since the 192nd session of the Executive Board in providing assistance to the reconstruction and development of the Gaza Strip.

There are no financial or administrative implications.

No decision is proposed.

1. This document presents an update on the UNESCO response to the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip since the 192nd session of the Executive Board. It covers the period from July 2013 to January 2014.

EDUCATION

2. Nine United Nations agencies, coordinated by UNESCO, supported the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in developing and implementing the EFA Package, in collaboration with civil society organizations and universities. The joint UN/MoEHE initiative, focusing on early childhood development, inclusive and child-friendly education, is piloted in 14 schools in Gaza. Its overall goal is to increase access and retention of school-aged children in the education system and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

3. During the period under review, new Grade 0 classrooms (one year of pre-school) were opened for the first time in Gaza, teachers were trained on early childhood development, and educational materials were provided. Furthermore, a new project funded by OPEC Fund for International Development was initiated in October 2013 to support the implementation of the EFA Package, in particular focusing on two components: inclusive and child-friendly education and child-led activities/innovative teaching and learning. This new phase, implemented closely with the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and UNRWA, includes 12 additional pilot schools in Gaza, including six UNRWA schools, bringing the total to 26 pilot schools. A group of Master Trainers has been identified and trained in order to implement a comprehensive development programme on inclusive and child-friendly education including awareness activities in the pilot schools. During the period under review, an agreement between UNESCO and AGFUND was also signed to further support the implementation of the EFA Package.

3. With financial support from the Saudi Committee for the Relief of Palestinian People, UNESCO supported universities in Gaza through a new initiative which is focusing on (i) expanding access to resource materials and books through libraries and (ii) implementing an advocacy strategy on the right to education. Two libraries were equipped over the reporting period, in Gaza City and in Khan Younis, paying special attention to the accessibility of students with disabilities.

5. UNESCO continued its active participation in the humanitarian cluster system and supported the Education Cluster in the process of developing the 2014 Humanitarian Programme Cycle. Building on successful activities from the past years, a possible UNESCO future intervention in Gaza was included in the Cycle, aiming to ensure that schools are able to fulfil their crucial role as protective learning environments for the self-development of boys and girls, and for communities at large.

6. UNESCO continued coordinating the United Nations Education Thematic Group on the implementation of the first United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Palestine, launched in August 2013. The education component of the UNDAF contributes largely to the implementation of the EFA Package for the next three years and includes a strong focus on Gaza as one of the geographical priority areas.

CULTURE

7. UNESCO has been cooperating with the "Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem", the Islamic University in Gaza and the French General Consulate in Jerusalem to safeguard the archaeological site of Saint Hilarion Monastery/Tell Umm Amer in Nuseirat, which is inscribed on Palestine's Tentative list. In January 2014, two experts provided on-the-job training to eight workers and students to enhance local capacities on stonemasonry necessary for the emergency restoration works, especially those related to the consolidation of the western wall of the crypt. The insufficient funding necessary to complete the emergency measures to safeguard the site continues to raise concerns.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

8. The major project currently being implemented in partnership with the Birzeit University Media Development Centre – *Assessment of Palestine's media landscape using UNESCO's Media Development Indicators* – pays special attention to reflect the situation in Gaza. Researchers and media stakeholders from Gaza have been actively involved throughout the assessment process, and participants from Gaza were involved via videoconference in all of the meetings held within the framework of the project. The final Media Development Indicators report is planned to be published in this year.

9. Activities related to safety training for journalists in Palestine have also sought to address the specific difficulties faced by journalists in Gaza, in light of the

challenging environment in which they operate. The two safety training projects implemented over the reporting period involved collaborating with universities in Gaza in the organization of training courses for students in their media departments, covering among others first aid basics, stress management, professional safety procedures, journalists' rights and legal standards concerning freedom of expression.
